# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# PLANNING
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2563
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2001
BELOW POVERTY LINE
ARUN KUMAR

**Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:**

(a) the absolute number of persons below poverty line in the country in the year 1997-98;

(b) the reduction or increase in their number by March, 1999;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to wipe-out this number; and

(d) the timeframe fixed for this?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT, MINISTER OF STATE IN TH MINISTRIES OF PLANNING, STATISTICS & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE)

(a): The Planning Commission estimates the percentage of persons living below the poverty line at national and state level from the large sample surveys on consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. These percentages are applied on the estimated population in order to arrive at the number of persons living below the poverty line. The two latest such surveys were conducted in 1993-94 and 1999-2000. As such, the estimates of number of persons living below the poverty line in the year 1997-98 are not available.

(b): The number of persons living below the poverty line calculated from 50th Round large sample survey on consumer expenditure conducted by the NSSO in 1993-94 was 320.4 million,which is 35.97 per cent of the total population. The data from the latest large survey of the 55th Round on a 30-day recall basis indicate the number of persons living below the poverty line in the country in 1999-2000 as 260.25 million, which is 26.10 per cent of the total population.

(c): There is a three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country. These are:
(i) acceleration of economic growth,
(ii) human, and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and
(iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.

The increase in income of the people living below the poverty line occur from the joint impact of general growth process and direct income generation of the poor arising from various anti-poverty programmes introduced from time to time by the Government for their upliftment. Since the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), the Government has been implementing employment andasset generation schemes for the upliftment of the people living below the poverty line. These schemes are mainly of two types, self-employment and wage employment. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has been the major self-employment programme and it has been in operation in all the blocks of the country since 1980. The wage employment programme initially was National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) during the Sixth Plan period.In the Seventh Plan, another wage employment programme under the name Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was introduced.Then in 1989, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched by merging the National Rural Employment Programme and the Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme, and it became the main wage-employment programme. In addition, several programmes to help the poor were also in operation until March, 1999. These programmes are:Million Wells Scheme (MWS),Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training of Rural Youth for Self- Employment (TRYSEM),Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA).

From 1st April, 1999, these programmes, excepting EAS and JRY have beenrestructured into single self-employment programme called the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) with the primary objectives of focussed approach to poverty alleviation, capitalising advantages of group lending, and overcoming the problems associated with multiplicity of programmes. Also, from 1st April, 1999, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) has been restructured as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) with the primary objective of creation of demand driven community village infrastructure including durable assets at the village level and assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustained employment. Its secondary objective is generation of supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in the rural areas. The wage employment under the programme is given to Below Poverty Lines (BPL) families.

From 1.12.1997, Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) is the main poverty alleviation programme in the urban areas. The SJSRY, which has subsumed all the earlier three urban poverty alleviation programmes, viz., Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), Prime Minister`s Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP), seeks to provide gainful employment to unemployed or underemployed urban and educated up to IX standard for setting up self employment ventures or provision of wage employment. The implementation of SJSRY is relying on suitable community structures on the UBSP pattern and delivery of inputs under this programme is through the medium of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and such community structure.

(d): No time frame has been fixed by the Government for total elimination of poverty. However, the Ninth Five Year Plan has projected the percentage of people living below the poverty line to less than 5% by the end of the perspective period (2011-12).